



# San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **THE PARTY'S OVER ON FIESTA ISLAND**

*Office of the City Attorney & Council District 6*

*Target Illegal Dumping , Aggressive Approach*

**San Diego, CA--**The party's over on Fiesta Island — at least for those illegally dumping trash and construction debris. As a result of a special enforcement partnership between the San Diego City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, the City's Park and Recreation Department Rangers, and the San Diego Police Department's Northern Division, nine San Diegans were caught dumping trash around Mission Bay Park last summer. Eight defendants have been convicted by Deputy City Attorney Kathryn Lange, and one case is awaiting trial.

Illegal dumping at Mission Bay degrades the marine environment. Construction and demolition debris, such as painted, stained, or treated wood, drywall, or metallic debris, all release harmful chemicals into the bay. Hazardous wastes such as paint, paint thinner, and cleaning products are often dumped at the same time as other construction wastes. When landscaping debris is dumped, it can result in the growth of non-native species that invade the natural habitat. Burning trash or demolition debris results in toxic ash being deposited on the shoreline or in the water.

(more)

Dumping also costs the citizens of San Diego for clean up. A Park and Recreation Department official estimates that 1,100 tons of illegally dumped trash is cleaned up from around Mission Bay every year, costing taxpayers approximately \$40,000. (Photographs are available.)

As of January 1, 2002, defendant's convicted in dumping cases will be paying more because fines for dumping in the City of San Diego have gone up. It's a lot cheaper to properly dispose of waste at the Miramar Landfill, than pay the fines. Fines can be as much as \$1500 for a first offense.

"We are committed to the Mayor's goal to clean up our beaches and bays," stated City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "These convictions send the message that we won't tolerate using Fiesta Island as a dump." "This is the kind of aggressive law enforcement that I have long advocated," stated Councilmember Donna Frye. "I want to express my appreciation to the many City law enforcement personnel involved in this coordinated effort."

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